

TAP AND CATCH A BALLOON

This activity is a progression that combines Push Up Think Thin (in chapter 6, page 209) and The Up and Up (see page 137). For a fun balance treat, Tap and Catch features a visual target (the balloon) and a coordinated activity (catching).

Benefits »

- ⦿ Enhances torso and shoulder function and flexibility.
- ⦿ Strengthens core muscles.
- ⦿ Uses visual targets.
- ⦿ Challenges eye–hand coordination.

Set It Up »

Each participant will need a balloon.

How to Do It »

The Start

- ⦿ Participants sit tall at the back or edge of the chair (their choice), holding a balloon.
- ⦿ Their shoulders should be over hips, abdominals in, and head pulled back in line with shoulders.

The Moves

Use the following cues.

- ⦿ Participant taps the balloon into the air, volleyball serve style, high enough above their head so that they must reach up to catch it.
- ⦿ Quickly, pull in the abdominal wall, and extend both arms and the rib cage upward to reach and catch the balloon.
- ⦿ Reach for the balloon with both hands while it is still overhead.
- ⦿ Return to the starting position.
- ⦿ Repeat the tap and catch 6 to 8 times and progress to doing 12 times, as tolerated.
- ⦿ Pull in the abdominal wall each time when reaching up to catch the balloon.



Take It Further »

- ⦿ Increase the number of repetitions.
- ⦿ Tap the balloon a little higher to encourage a longer reach.

Give It More Balance »

- ⦿ Sit at the edge of the chair with feet tandem and heels lifted.
- ⦿ Tap the balloon to the left and right at varying tangents; 10, 11, 12, 1, and 2 o'clock spots, for example.
- ⦿ Caution them to not lean out too far. The spots should be in the same plane as their body, not out in front of them.

Keep It Safe »

Pulling in the abdominal wall while reaching up and catching will help support their back and keep the exercise more comfortable. If they can't reach way up, then little taps and catches are fine. Nothing should hurt.

Live It »

Playing Tap and Catch is fun and promotes strength, length, and better balance.